AMENDMENT TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please insert the following before paragraph [0001].

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

Please insert the following before paragraph [0003].

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Please amend the paragraph [0003] beginning on page 1, as follows.

There exists a ~~The present invention is based on the~~ general problem of being able to obtain uninterrupted operation and maximum throughput in a singling station to which sheet material to be singled is fed in the form of bundles that possibly arrive irregularly. It is obviously rather unsuitable to use for this purpose transport systems that transport a stack to be singled to the singling unit only when the latter has finished singling a current stack. Such solutions can be realized economically due to the simple coordination of the bundle logistics, but in practice they have a considerably limited throughput which is restricted by the feed time of the next stack to be singled to the singling unit. Developments of this principle reduce interruption times by faster feed of further stacks, but they likewise settle for suboptimal throughput rates dependent on the feed speed, and cause additional downtimes due to the increased transport speed – possibly due to displacements of stacks – which results in increased maintenance effort.

Please insert the following before paragraph [0008].

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Please amend the paragraph [0011] beginning on page 3, as follows.

The invention offers the advantage of a considerably simpler construction, since it can ensure continuous singling of stacks of loose sheet material by the use of only two elements, namely by a ~~uniaxially~~ multiaxially moveable first feeding element and a uniaxially ~~multiaxially~~ movable second feeding element. The simplification consists primarily in that only one feeding element executing an elaborately controlled, multiaxial loop motion is now needed, while the other feeding element executes a simple uniaxial motion on the feeding path. As compared to the prior art, the simpler control and mechanics of such a construction leads to higher reliability through increased failure safety and also to higher productivity and throughput due to less frequent malfunctions. A further important advantage is the maintenance of continuous singling in particular in the case of very fast singling units or small stacks, since the multiaxially movable first feeding element describes only a short and quickly traversed motion path when taking over the united stack. Therefore, the uniaxially movable second feeding element can feed further stacks out of the deposit position faster than comparable feeding elements with more complex motion paths. The invention can thus increase the throughput and reliability of a singling unit while involving a simpler construction.

Please amend the paragraph [0018] beginning on page 6, as follows.

Further, it can be provided that the second ~~first~~ feeding element has a deposit surface with holes and a plurality of opposing elements which can reach through the holes. The deposit surface and the opposing elements can be adapted to be shifted relative to each other to be able to hold a stack of sheet material to be singled spaced from the deposit surface. Moreover, the opposing elements can preferably engage the holes of the second ~~first~~ feeding element to such an extent as to provide a substantially closed deposit surface for subsequent application of a loose stack of sheet material to be singled.

Please insert the following before paragraph [0019]

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Please insert the following before paragraph [0029]

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE EMBODIMENTS

Please amend the paragraph [0030] beginning on page 8, as follows.

Figure 2 illustrates the inventive principle of stack feed for ensuring continuous singling of bank-note stacks according to a further embodiment. Figure 2a shows a front view of a bank-note stack 1 which, held and fed by the rake-shaped first feeding element 2, is singled by the singling roller of the singling unit ~~element~~ 5. Meanwhile the second feeding element 3, which is equipped with a multiplicity of parallel, straight depressions for receiving the prongs of the rake-shaped first feeding element 2, is located in the deposit position. There it receives a bank-note stack 4 to be fed that is transported by the stack inserting device 6 to the deposit position (Fig. 2b). The fed bank-note stacks 1, 4 can for example be previously debanded automatically. The second feeding element 3 feeds the stack 4 to be fed for singling by moving on the feeding path 8 in the direction of the singling unit 5 until the bank-note stack 4 to be fed comes to lie directly below the first feeding element 2 (Fig. 2c). The first feeding element 2 is now located between the stack 1 to be singled and the fed stack 4.

Please amend the paragraph [0036] beginning on page 9, as follows.

When, in an operating state according to Figure 2f, the second feeding element 3 is moved downward again to be able to receive a new stack, the rotatable surface

elements 11 are rotated around their rotation axle 10 into an open position, as illustrated in Figure 3b, being actively controlled or passively induced merely by the downward sliding of the feeding element 3. This permits the second feeding element 3 to slide downward ~~upward~~ past the rake-shaped first feeding element 2. The folding back of the surface elements 11 into the overlapping arrangement according to Figure 3a can again be effected by active control or passively.